
IMPRIMATUR.

Septemb. 19. 1687.

JO. BATTELY,
R^{mo} in Pri. ac Domino Wil-
helmo Archiepiscop. Cantuar. à
Sacris. domesticis.

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A
DISCOURSE

SHEWING

That Protestants are on the
Safer Side, notwithstanding
the uncharitable Judgment
of their Adversaries;

AND

That THEIR RELIGION is the
Surest Way to Heaven.



[*Luke de Beaulieu*]

W. B 1572

L O N D O N :

Printed for Richard Chiswell, at the Rose and Crown
in St. Paul's Church-yard, MDCLXXXVII.

A

OF THE

CHURCH

That the Church is the
only body which is
the only body which is
the only body which is

AND

That the Church is the
only body which is

THE

LOWDOWN

Printed for the Church at the House and Church
in St. Paul's Church-yard, MDCCLXXVI

THE PREFACE.

Coming accidentally into a Family always frequented, and of late much disturbed by some Roman Catholics, who by fulminating Damnation against all Protestants, had terrified some Friends, I applied myself to clear their Doubts, and to remove those Fears wherewith the Noise and Threats of Hell-fire had affected their Minds; This engaged me into a long Debate with one of the Parties who was very positive and earnest in maintaining the utter Impossibility of being saved out of the Church of Rome. And upon that it came to be enquired, Whether it be their Relation to Rome, or their Relation to Christ, that Men are to be saved by? Whether our State of Eternity depends upon the Talk, or Confidence, or hard Censures of Men, or or upon the Truth of our Religion, and our Sincerity in professing of it? Whether it be the ever-living God, or any mortal Men that make true Religion? Whether that be not the Best which best agrees with the Divine Revelation? And, whether our Saviour had referr'd us to Rome, and the Papal Authority, for the knowledg of Saving Truth; or plainly taught by Himself, and by his Apostles, all that is requisite and sufficient to Salvation?

About

The Preface.

About these we differ'd: but yet agreed upon the whole, that the great odds in point of safety, which they apprehend to be betwixt them and us, must be grounded upon the Excellency of their Religion above ours; and must therefore appear in their Faith, Worship, and Morals, which are the essential parts of Religion, and make it right or wrong, according as they are themselves.

The Talk I then had about this Subject, and the occasion of it, put me upon writing the ensuing Discourse. Wherein my chiefest Aim hath been to fix my Reader upon that which is positive with us, and is maintained on all sides, that being altogether requisite, and of it self sufficient to make a Man a good Christian: And then to consider those Points in belief and practice, about which we differ, and to shew on which side lies the Advantage for means of Grace, and certainty of Salvation.

The INTRODUCTION.

THE Church of ~~Rome~~ would not only have all her Dictates received as Divine and true, but would likewise have nothing received as such, but what she delivers; insomuch that her Writers would persuade us that we can have no Assurance of the Truth of our common Christianity, because we receive it not from the Infallible Chair, and rely not on its Authority for the proving of it. As if a Man could not know, and firmly believe that *Jesus Christ came into the World to save Sinners*, without so much as having heard any thing of a Roman Church and her Infallibility. And as if those great Truths which God hath revealed were not to be embrac'd and assented to, because they are his, but depended upon the good Pleasure of a Party of Men, who can no more add greater Authority to what God hath declared, than they can make their own Sayings of an equal Authority with God's.

We can admit that Church for a joint Witness with other Christian Churches, that the Bible is the Word of God, and that the Christian Creed is the Catholick Faith: But there is no reason to think, that any thing is the more true, or the more necessary, meerly because she saith it. That which is equally attested by all Christian Churches, who were all Depositories of the Divine Oracles, and of the Christian Religion, hath a cogent and a clear Evidence: But that wherein she stands divided from all the rest, and bears witness only to her own Prerogatives, is either true, because she asserts it (which none will dare to say) or ought
to

to be proved by the Testimony of the whole Christian Church, and of Divine Revelation, which she can never do.

So we have this great Advantage in those things which we assert as Points of Saving Faith, that we have the plain and expresse Words of Holy Scripture, and the Concurrence of the whole Church: whereas those things which we reject, are made a Creed only by one particular Church, not above one hundred Years ago, and have no Ground in Holy Writ.

Some may dispute with us about our Rites or Discipline, or some abstruse and disputable Points: But for that Faith whereon we ground our Hopes of Salvation, nothing can be objected against it. It is the same wherein every Christian is baptised, the same which was before the Reformation, and before the Want of it; in Times of greatest Purity the same Faith was profest, and in the worst of Times, under the greatest Corruptions it was still preserved: and that not in one Kingdom, or only here in the *West*, but in all Patriarchates, and in all Christian Churches in the World. We have neither added nor diminish'd, nor made any Alteration in that Rule of Faith, which is the Badge and the Ground of Christianity. So that as to this Point, our Religion is now as it was long before *Luther*: We have no other Creed than that which was universally profest all along. Our Dispute with the Church of *Rome* is about their new one, made since *Luther*, and profest no where else but in her Communion; that we cannot embrace. It hath neither the same Authority from God nor from Men, as hath the Catholick Belief.

To

To make this plain here, I set the two Creeds at large, to be consulted as the Reader finds occasion.

The *Catholick* and *Apostolick* Creed, explained by the *Nicene* and the *Athanasian*, in what concerns our Saviour's Divinity, but never enlarged until the Council of *Trent*.

The Roman Creed.

I Most stedfastly admit and embrace the *Apostolick* and *Ecclesiastical* Traditions, with the rest of the *Constitutions* and *Observations* of the *Roman Church*.

I Believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of Heaven and Earth.

And in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.

Who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary.

Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried.

He

I also receive the Holy Scripture according to that sense which the Holy Mother Church (whose it is to interpret it) hath held and doth hold; nor will ever understand or interpret it otherwise than according to the unanimous Consent of the Fathers.

I profess also that there are seven true and proper Sacraments of the new Covenant instituted by our Lord Jesus Christ, and necessary to the Salvation of Mankind (tho not all of them necessary to every Man) viz. Baptism, Confirmation, the Eucharist, Penance, extreme Unction, Orders and Matrimony, all which do confer Grace; and whereof Baptism, Confirmation and Orders cannot be repeated without Sacrilege.

I likewise receive and admit all the received and approved Rites of the Catholique Church in the solemn Administration of all the aforesaid Sacraments.

B

All

He descended into
Hell: the third Day
he arose again from
the Dead.

He ascended into
Heaven, and sitteth
on the Right Hand of
God the Father Al-
mighty.

From thence he
shall come to judg the
Quick and the Dead.

I believe in the
Holy Ghost,

The Holy Catho-
lick Church,

The Communion
of Saints,

The Forgiveness
of Sins,

All and every thing which was defined
and declared about Original Sin and Ju-
stification by the most holy Council of
Trent, I embrace and receive.

I profess likewise that in the Mass
is offered to God a true, proper and propi-
tiatory Sacrifice for the Quick & Dead;
and that in the most holy Sacrament of
the Eucharist, there is really and sub-
stantially the Body and Blood, together
with the Soul & Divinity of our Lord
Jesus Christ: And that there is a Con-
version made of the whole Substance of
Bread into his Body, and of the whole
Substance of Wine into his Blood, which
Conversion the Catholick Church calls
Transubstantiation.

I also confess that under either Kind
or Species only, whole and entire Christ
and the true Sacrament is received.

I constantly hold that there is a Pur-
gatory; and that the Souls there detain-
ed are helped by the Suffrages of the
Faithful.

As also that the Saints, who reign to-
gether with Christ, are to be worshipped,
and prayed to, and their Reliques to be
venerated.

I most firmly assert that the Images
of Christ, of the Blessed Virgin, and
of the other Saints, are to be had and re-
tained, and that due Honour and Wor-
ship is to be imparted to them.

The Resurrection
of the Body,

I also affirm that the Power of Indulgences was left by Christ to his Church, and that the Use of them is most salutary to Christian People.

And the Life everlasting.

I acknowledge the Holy Catholick and Apostolick Roman Church to be the Mother and Mistress of all Churches: And I promise and swear true Obedience to the Pope of Rome, who is Christ's Vicar, and Successor to St. Peter the Prince of the Apostles.

I also without doubt receive and profess all other things delivered, defined and declared by the sacred Canons and Oecumenical Councils, especially by the most holy Synod of Trent; and all things contrary to them, with all Heresies whatsoever, condemned, rejected and cursed by the Church, I likewise reject, and condemn and curse.

This true Catholick Faith, without which no Man can be saved, which at present I freely hold and profess, I will (by God's help) constantly retain and confess intire and inviolable to my last Breath, and take care to the utmost of my Power, that the same shall be taught, held and profest by all under me, and whose Care shall belong to me in my Office. I the aforesaid N. promise, vow and swear it: So help me God, and these holy Evangils.

This Roman Creed it is about which we differ: for as to the Christian Creed there is no Dispute betwixt us; only that we account it sufficient, and will profess none else.

This is the State of the Difference betwixt the Church of Rome and ours. We stand for that Faith which is confessed of all sides to be truly Catholick and Apostolick; and disown that Roman which they would impose upon us.

I know that they seek to retort this Objection of making of new Creeds, and would make the distinct Denial of the several Points of theirs to be in like manner so many Articles of ours; as if it were with us as fundamental a Truth, that there is no *Roman Purgatory*, as that *the Blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all Sins*: Whereas it is most apparent that the Negative of false Opinions doth in no wise become a Part of the Christian Doctrine, nor of the Christian Creed.

True Religion is not to swell in Proportion to the Encrease of Errors, for then every new Addition to Christianity would make a new necessary Article for the rejecting of it, and it would be in the Power of every Heresiarch to enlarge the Rule of Faith against him. Whereas the Christian Faith was once delivered to the Saints, and must ever remain the same, whatever Heresies some Men are pleased to broach. That Saints and Images are to be worshipped, is a Point of the Roman Faith; that they are not, is not a Point of mine; 'tis only a Declaration of my disowning this Roman Doctrine, as being neither in the Christian Creed, nor in the Word of God. The refusing of Mens Errors, whether they be Pagans, or any Hereticks, is not a Part of our Belief, but rather of our Disbelief. Our denying that *Jupiter*, or Great *Diana*, or any Creature, though never so solemnly canoniz'd, are to receive Religious Honours, is only a renouncing of Mens Devices, but doth not constitute so many new Doctrines; only what God hath commanded in this case, is Part of our Religion, *Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

Our Creed and Religion therefore is still universal, and truly Primitive, although our rejecting some Points which they have made Part of theirs in the Church of *Rome*, can be neither so Primitive nor so Universal. What our Church owns for her Saving Belief, is own'd, and ever was, by all
Christian

Christian Churches; what she rejects from being such, is of a later Date, and was never so general. So that instead of asking us, Where was our Religion before our Forefathers were forc'd to leave the *Roman Church*? it should rather be enquired, why they threw off those several Tenets contained in the *Roman Creed*? and then the Question would be plain and fairly stated, and might from every Man that hath but read the Bible, receive a clear Answer. But it is very unreasonable to demand such Authorities for refusing of any new and absurd humane Inventions, as for the receiving those Truths which God hath expressly revealed, and his Church received all along.

As for the Vices or Vertues of King *Henry* the 8th, or any others, who were engaged to struggle with the Papal Power and Usurpations, they signify nothing to us. The enormous Faults of such as are reputed Supreme and Infalible Guides of a Party may well reproach them: But our Religion hath no dependence on Historical Passages of any Mens Doings. God's Veracity and Revelation is the Ground we depend upon; Him we worship, and in Him we believe, as is to be seen in our Publick Liturgies: For that we claim the Warrant of his Word, and the Suffrage of all Christian Churches, than which no better Ground, nor no higher Authority is ever to be had. If the *Roman Creed* had the same, we would embrace it heartily, for the well-being of our Souls; or if it were less repugnant to the Christian Institution, we might be persuaded to comply, or to be silent, for the Peace and Tranquillity of our present Welfare.

But my Design is only to settle and to pacify them that are stagger'd and disturb'd with the ruder Noise of Damnation dashing against them; and therefore I will pursue things

things no further than to shew, That neither the Judgment of our Adversaries, nor any thing wherein both Churches disagree, any ways endangers our future Happiness : But that as to the securing the eternal Welfare of our immortal Souls, ours is to be preferred before the Roman Communion.

A



A DISCOURSE shewing, &c.

THE Concerns of Eternity being so tremendous, and many not so well instructed as they should, 'tis no wonder if some Men are frighted with the fearful Sentence pronounced against them by the Zealots of the Roman Party. To any Man serious or timorous, Threats of Damnation are terrible, even in the Mouth of a Mortal Creature: Though it only betrays the Presumption of any sinful Man that dares sit on the Tribunal of his Almighty Judge; yet because some are so tender and so weak in this Point, as to be much disordered and dismayed to see themselves adjudged to Hell, though it were but a Dream or a melancholy Fancy; therefore it may be worth the while, briefly to state the Case, and consider on what Grounds they proceed that so freely pronounce our Doom. And I doubt not but to make it appear that we want only their good Word, or also their good Will, when for Safety and a sure Foundation we are at least as well as they. It may surprize and startle to see one stare, and with great Confidence denounce that you are a dead Man that cannot live an Hour; but having recovered your self, and reflected upon't, you pass by without further Harm, and smile at the Humour. *There is one Law-giver, who is able to save and to destroy. Who art thou that judgest another?*

Our intire dependence is upon God, as well for the state of Eternity as for the present. We do not fall, when we
go.

Go hence, under a new or an unknown Power, neither are left to Mens Mercy : but the same God by whom we were taken out of our Mother's Womb, and to whom we were left, when we hang'd yet upon her Breasts ; he that took care of us, and provided for us here upon Earth, is still to dispose of us in our future State : And we shall be judged by him, by whom we were made and redeemed.

This God whom we now serve, and under whose Almighty Dominion we must ever remain, is infinitely good, *He would have all Men to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the Truth.* Therefore he doth not seek Advantages against them, nor lay Snares in their Way, nor wrap up his Saving Light in Obscurity, but deals with them in much Mercy, making that Grace of his which bringeth Salvation appear unto all Men, that they may know the Way to Life, and clearly see what they must do to obtain Eternal Happiness. This, God shews Men by that Revelation he hath made of his blessed Will, how they ought to walk and to please him : Therein all things necessary are very plainly exprest, that they may be understood of all. And for a further Help and a greater Security to Men of all Capacities, a Summary of Divine Truths, such as are fundamental and needful, was bytimes made and propagated, together with the Christian Religion, over all the World. So that we have the Word of God, and the Apostolick Creed, both of them always attested by the whole Christian Church, as two firm Pillars, whereon to repose our selves. That we might be strong and immoveable in the Faith, assured that we are not imposed upon by our Guides, and that length of Time hath made no Alteration, but that we hold now the same things which were taught by Christ, and received of his Church ; and that we make nothing necessary to Salvation, which from the Beginning was not so.

†

First

First, then, The Word of God contained in the Holy Bible is, by Consent of all, that Saving Truth of God by which we must live, and by which we shall be judged; so that whatsoever is there written, is to be embraced as certain, and as coming from God. Whether it relates to the Creation and the Government of the World, or to the many Wonders which God wrought in former Ages, to deliver his People, and to confirm and attest his Revelation; or to the Fall of Man and the Promise of a Saviour; or to his Mission into the World, and his accomplishing the great Work of our Redemption; or to the Gospel-Promises, and Doctrines and Mysteries; or to Laws and Rules of Righteousness, and Institutions of Divine Worship; whatsoever it relates to, it is to be embraced with an humble and obedient Faith. Nothing is to be questioned that is contained in the Bible; all humane Authorities and humane Reasonings must submit to it, for the Bible is the Word of God.

Go into all the World, and you shall find all Churches every where assert the same as well as we. The Jews concur with us in the Divine Authority of the ancient Oracles, before our blessed Lord's Coming: But all Christians in every Part, and in every Age of the Church, embrace and reverence both the Old and New Testament, as the Book of God, wherein are contained the Declarations of his Will, and the Words of eternal Life. If you enquire what they thought of it, in the first or second Ages after our Saviour, or at any other time; or if you go to the *Eastern* or *African* Churches, or any the most remote Place where Christianity is profest, you shall find all agreed in this, that the Bible contains the Doctrine of eternal Salvation, and is the Word of God. This is not a thing wherein the Greeks differ from the Latins, or Protestants from the Papists, but is the firm Belief of all. This is a most constant and invariable

riable Tradition, which for Extent of Time and Place is universal, and therefore of the greatest Credit, altogether unquestionable.

So here is a very great Number of Divine and undoubted Truths agreed upon by all the Christian World; even all the plain and clear Propositions contained in Holy Scripture. Although they be of things not seen, that are past or to come; yet being there revealed, they are assented to by all. And he that should deny any of them, would be condemned by Christians of all Communions; his refusing to acknowledge the Truth of any Contents of the Bible, would be interpreted a Denial of God's Veracity, because they are all perswaded, that the Bible is the Word of God, written by the Guidance and the Inspiration of his Holy Spirit.

He that rejects this Foundation on which all Christians are grounded, ought never to concern himself in the Differences among them, nor pretend to be of any Church; for by his denying the Truth of that Revelation which they all own to be Divine, and whereon they rely, he makes himself an Infidel, and a Party against them all. And yet if we could see to the bottom of Things, I doubt not but it would appear, that the Disputes and Contentions which are among Christians, are most eagerly promoted by such as deride those great Truths which they all own to be fundamental. They that jointly believe the Truth and the Divine Authority of the Holy Scripture, are set to wrangling among themselves about some of its most obscure and unnecessary Places, by them that believe none of it; and for not mutually embracing and practising upon those most important Points whereon we are agreed, we expose those Doctrines of our common Salvation, which we all profess, to the Contempt of the prophane and incredulous World.

Secondly,

Secondly, The other Pillar which together with the Holy Scripture, strongly Supports of our Faith, is the Christian Creed. We find also for this the same Consent of all Christian Churches, they are unanimous in the Belief and Profession of it, and hold all its Articles to be those great and necessary Truths without which none can be saved. Whereas the several Contents of the Bible, although equally true, yet are not of an equal Concern, and are too numerous to be carried in mind: There was a Collection of those principal Points which are necessary to all, drawn and appointed from the Beginning, as *a Form of sound Words*, or a Summary of the Christian Saving Faith. This we call the Apostles Creed, and this, I say, in all Ages of the Church, and in the full Extent of it, hath been received as a Confession of that Faith, without which none can be saved. Go to *Rome*, or to *Geneva*, or among the *Lutherans*, or the *Moscovites*, or the *Greeks*, or *Ethiopians*, as many as call on the Saving Name of *Jesus*, do thus make Confession of their Faith in him. Besides that each Article is very expressly and in many Places revealed in the Holy Bible, here is the unanimous Agreement of the whole Church from first to last, in every Nation, and every Period of Time from the Days of Christ, that this is the Badge and Cognizance of a Christian Believer, and that the Profession of this Belief is the Faith once delivered to the Saints, which shall endure to the End of the World. Into this Faith, and none other, all Christians are baptized, in all Communions, thereby to be made Members of Christ's Catholick Church, and Heirs of everlasting Life, if they keep it unto the End whole and undefiled.

Thus for the believing any of those Points contained in the Apostles Creed, or any of the Histories, Promises or Commands deliver'd in Holy Scripture, a Christian hath the best Warrant he can have for the Belief of any thing

upon Earth, even the joint Attestation of the whole Church of every Age, who testified publickly, and sometimes sealed their Testimony with their Blood, that the Bible is the Word of God, and the Creed is the Faith of Christ. However Christians have fal'n out about other things, as to these they are at one. The Belief of this engageth you into no Dispute with any. Here is a very great Number of most marvellous Transactions, and gracious Promises, and righteous Laws, and important Predictions which are own'd by all to be Divine and infallibly true. Your Belief and Profession of these depend not upon your Fancy, or the Opinions of private Guides, or the Tradition of your Countrey, or of your Party, but upon the unanimous Witness of millions of wise and good Men, Apostles, Martyrs, Confessors, and all those numerous Christian Societies dispers'd over the World, which make up the universal Church.

Here is enough own'd of all sides to make up an happy Agreement betwixt all Churches; The having the same Bible, and the same Creed, is a very firm and large and lasting Foundation for Peace. Here are all things that are of the greatest Moment for Faith and a good Life, for the Service of God and the Salvation of our Souls, every where receiv'd and profess'd. He that should weigh the Importance of each of those Truths which are acknowledged by all, would wonder what it is that can divide Christians, and make them so fierce and uncharitable one against another. We see Bigots of different Communions damn and destroy one another, as if they were not Partakers of the same Nature, and joyned together by owning the same God and the same Saviour, and all the chiefest Articles of the same Religion. Besides Mens Ignorance and Malice and intemperate Zeal, no account can be given of the unbecoming Contentions of Christians among themselves; but that the things wherein they differ are of a present Concernment, for

for Wealth or Dominion. Secular Interest and humane Passions no doubt have made the Breach, and they that secretly laugh at all Religion, and neither regard the Creed nor the Word of God, set on the Zealots to dispute, and for their own Ends make use of the Contention; when all this while there is a vast Collection of Truths for Comfort and Contempt of the World, for Meekness and mutual Love, profess to be firmly believ'd by all Parties engag'd.

But as Men are always craving and pursuing new things, rather than they will make an Estimat of what they have receiv'd, because they love to extend their Desires, rather than to be satisfied, and to be thankful; so they rather chuse to wrangle and dispute about the meanest Punctilios wherein they are at odds, than to rest in the greater things wherein they are agreed, because they love to talk and to contend, better than to practise and embrace each other.

This unsettles some Men that they know not what to believe, and gives great occasion to the prophane to despise Religion, as if all the Talk about it were arbitrary and uncertain; they magnifie the Variety of Opinions, and make as if the whole were matter of Contest, when they see the Contenders act as if they were agreed about nothing. Whereas I say, all the great Articles have always been unquestioned, notwithstanding the Peevishness of some, and the ill Designs of others, still the same Rules of Holiness, and the same Points of Belief, have remained constant and embraced by all: The same Divine Revelation and the same Christian Faith have every where prevail'd, and in the midst of all Disputes been preserved and acknowledged. So that the whole Substance, and all the necessary Parts of Religion, have always been sacred, confest and reverenc'd by all Christian Churches.

The twelve Articles of our Creed, and all the uncontroversied Truths revealed in Holy Scripture, make up a Body
of

of Divinity, so full, so excellent, and so comprehensive, that if we compare it with the Uncertainties and Dissentions that were every where in the Heathen World, at the first preaching of Christianity, we shall look on its Professors as very harmonious and very well agreed. There were never so many things so Great, so Wonderful, of so infinite a Concern to Mankind, so strongly attested, or so firmly believed by such infinite Multitudes of civiliz'd and knowing Men in all Parts of the World, for so many Ages together.

Here is a Foundation whereon every good Christian may build Peace and Charity towards all his Brethren, of whatever Countries or Communions they be, and may establish a sure Hope of eternal Happiness to his own Soul: if he doth heartily profess and obey those undoubted Truths which are embrac'd and acknowledged by all Christian Churches. He that is fully persuaded of the Truth of Christianity, and willing to depend for his Salvation upon that plain and essential Part of it, which is confessed by all, and to lay the great Strefs of his Hopes and of his Obedience upon his Creed, rather than upon controverted Points; he hath what will comfort his Soul, and encourage him to live well; and he is safe, peaceable and unmoveable in the midst of all Divisions: he may be doom'd, and called Names by them that would impose their Opinions as Articles of Faith; but it doth him no harm, whilst he stands firm upon the Rock of the Christian Creed, and the Christian Life together.

These two are acknowledged of all sides, to be both requisite and sufficient to Salvation: Faith and Works together making up the whole Condition of that Gospel-Covenant, to which is annexed the Promise of eternal Life. Therefore in enquiring why they are all condemn'd as Reprobates, that are not of the Roman Communion, we must consider what are the Advantages peculiar to that Party.

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I. Whe-

- I. Whether their Faith be more ancient and Catholick.
- II. Whether their Worship be purer, more conformable to God's Word.
- III. And whether their Righteousness exceeds that of all others.

I. I begin with that Faith which is peculiar to *Rome*, and is at large set down in the Introduction. It indeed contains more Articles than that of any other Church, and it may still receive further Encrease, whilst their Popes and Councils can make and impose new Definitions as necessary; but we believe that Saving Truths are neither made by Mens Authority, nor evidenced by Number. We are contented with that Faith once delivered by Christ and his Apostles, and from the Beginning received by the whole Church, and for this are declared Hereticks, and adjudged to Perdition.

That Roman Faith about which we differ, is made so essential and so necessary, that their Converts are appointed by the Roman Pontifical, in answer to the Bishops Questions, that reconciles him to make an express Profession of it; and if he were a noted Heretick, even to swear to it; condemning all to Damnation that embrace not the same; and promising that if ever he acts or believes any thing contrary to that Oath he takes with both his Hands on the holy Evangils, he will submit himself to the Severity of the Canons.

Although we be so far agreed with the Church of *Rome* (as hath been seen before) yet they lay so great a Stress upon their new Creed, and derive so much of their Devotions from it, That it is an astonishing and formidable Change to pass from our Church into theirs. Besides the Surprise of their publick Worship, which by a great Variety of Ceremonies, Images, and the Latin Tongue appears very

very strange: They have a prescribed Form of reconciling Hereticks, to which none can submit, but they that are fully persuaded that those Opinions, which became a Creed since the Council of *Trent*, are Part of that Saving Truth of God, which must be believed and profest under Pain of eternal Damnation.

It is not, as some may fancy or perhaps are told when solicited to change, that they shall find it very easy, and be received upon what Terms they please: But the Church of *Rome*, as all other wise Societies, hath its fixt Rules and Forms, and follows them without taking Notice of the Talk or Thoughts of private Persons. There is nothing can justify the Change, or make it tolerable to a Man of Conscience, but the being convinc'd of the Truth and Necessity of these Roman Doctrines, which thitherto were no Part of his Creed. When he hath search'd and us'd all proper means to understand the Points in Dispute, and to satisfy himself, and finds himself thoroughly persuaded that there is no Salvation in our Church, and that the Belief and Worship peculiar to the Church of *Rome* are truly Christian, and the necessary Terms of our Acceptance with God, then is he oblig'd to follow his Light, and to make Profession of what he believes to be Truth. But till a Man be thus convinc'd, his forsaking ours to joyn with the Church of *Rome* is a great Prevarication against God and Men, that will make him odious to both, and be inexcusable here and hereafter. The formal Abjuration of all that the Roman Church doth condemn, and the solemn Profession with a sacred Oath of all her Religious Doctrines and Practices in their full Latitude, (as is pretended in the Roman Pontifical) should make every doubting Person amongst us very serious and very inquisitive, clearly to know what he doth leave, and what he must embrace, if he resolves to forsake ours, and embrace the Roman Communion.

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The case will be much more tolerable with them that were born and educated in that Persuasion, if they are in a Mistake; they having never profess'd, nor perhaps had means to know any thing else, is a Plea of which they are not capable, who grown to Years of Discretion, turn from one Church to another. These had need take great Care that they deal uprightly, and examine to the Bottom of things, otherwise they mock God and Men, and must expect to fare accordingly.

I do not deny, but that Persons of Understanding and Sincerity may be prevail'd upon to pass from ours into the Roman Church, for whilst Men are mortal they may err and be impos'd upon: And may they all obtain Mercy that truly fear God, and embrace what they judg to be his Truth, (though they be mistaken) I only say, that no Man educated amongst us that really believes his Christian Creed, and would not throw his Soul away, can make Profession of the Roman Faith, till he becomes fully convinc'd of its Truth and Necessity. For now it is not as it was before the Council of *Trent*, when the Church of *Rome* it self had no other Confession of Faith, but only the Christian which is common to all Churches, and those Opinions which have since become Articles of the Roman Faith, needed not be explicitly profess'd, if they were but let alone and not disputed against: Whereas now since *Pius* the 4th, Hereticks so called, that become Profelytes, must make a solemn and express Declaration, that they believe every thing that the Church of *Rome* doth either teach or practise, and that they will submit and conform intirely to all that she prescribes either for Faith or for Divine Worship. This I say no Man of Conscience or Honour can do, till he become equally perswaded of the Truth and Necessity of the Roman, as of the Christian Creed.

Confidence proves nothing, and makes nothing to be really Divine, and we all know that Religion is not what some Men will call so: neither can we believe as we would, or as we are bid; we must have sufficient Reasons that those things are from God, which are proposed to our Faith; so that persuaded, as we are, we might for Temporal Designs play the Hypocrites and dissemble, but we can never become Proselytes to the Church of *Rome*. And whilst we have reason to believe that those Articles of Faith, which are peculiar to that Church, are rather contrary to God's Revelation than contained in it, and so think it our Duty to disown their Roman Creed: We are so far from apprehending our selves to be in danger of Damnation for so doing, that we rather believe we should incur that Danger, if against our Persuasion and Conscience we should solemnly protest and declare those things to be our Belief and our Faith, which indeed are not so.

How just and material are our Objections against each particular Doctrine which *Rome* would impose upon us, is to be seen in many of the late Treatises upon those Subjects: So here I shall give no further Account why we reject the Roman Creed, than by making upon it these three general Reflections, which alone might be sufficient to prove that it can in no wise be necessary to Salvation.

1. That the Roman Creed seems to be calculated for the Meridian of This World, rather than for the obtaining the Happiness of That which is to come. The Christian Creed doth make no Man greater or richer here on Earth; it is a Profession of our Faith in God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, which unites us to him, engageth us to love and to serve him, and to confess Christ before Men, and obey his Gospel; the end of it is to make us hope well and live well, to give us Comfort against all Sorrows, and Strength against all Temptations. But the Roman Creed makes the Roman Court

Court very great and very rich, and makes Men have a great dependence upon it. It establisheth those Opinions which much advance the Roman Dominion, making *Rome* to be the Mother and Mistress of all Churches; engaging Men to submit intirely to her, in embracing all her Traditions and Constitutions; and obliging all hers that have any Power, to use it to the utmost, to bring all Men, as they are able, under her Obedience.

Then for Gain you have several Articles, the Doctrine of Purgatory, and of Indulgences, the Worship of Saints and Images, which doth not exclude Gifts and Oblations to them; and the Sacrifice of the Mass offered, as they are paid for it, for the living or for the dead; besides all the Appeals to *Rome* and the Bulls and Expeditions from it: Read their whole Creed over again, and you will clearly see that it all makes for the Empire, or the Profit of *Rome*. 'Tis a shrewd Suspicion that they that have made it, and impos'd it upon the World, did therein regard their own Advantage more than the Truth of Christian Religion. When the old universal Christian Creed makes all for the Honour of God, and for the Sanctification and Salvation of human Souls, and this new particular Creed is all for the Glory and the Power of *Rome*; who that hath not resign'd up his reason, but will be forc'd to think, that the one is to bring Men to Heaven, and the other to bring Profit to *Rome*.

2. A Man will be so much the more confirm'd in this Opinion, when he shall observe that the Roman Zeal is all turned this Way. The Endeavours of their Zealots are much greater to make Men of the Roman Persuasion, as to the controverted Points, than to make Christians in what we are all agreed: and amongst them a Man that believes the Bible and the ancient Creeds is as much damn'd and hated as if he were a meer *Turk* or *Heathen*. Their Proceedings against them whom they call Hereticks, have been

more bloody and violent than against meer Unbelievers; as if owning the same God and Saviour, and the same Articles of Hope and Redemption were nothing, except we also own the same Submission to *Rome*.

It may be reckoned as an Instance of their great Earnestness to propagate their Creed, that their later Miracles, for more than these five hundred Years, are all in the behalf of it. The Faith once delivered to the Saints, was evidenced by those ancient Miracles recorded in the Bible: But this Growing Faith of *Rome* is recommended to Peoples Belief by later Wonders, such as their Legends and Breviaries, and many Books of Devotion contain. I need not say that many of those Miracles here in the Western Church are so dubious and ill-contriv'd; that they make little for the Credit of those Doctrines which they are design'd to vouch: I only note that they are all intended for to make credible those Points of the Roman Faith which are destitute of the Testimony of God's Word, and of the Universal Church: and that if we had not better Miracles, and much better attested, for the Proof of that Religion that came from *Jerusalem*, than they have for that which came from *Rome*, *Libertines* would not want an advantageous Plea to justify their Infidelity.

And, 3. We may add, that this Roman Creed is both new and confin'd, whereas the Christian is as Catholick as the Church it self; that is, is equally extended to all Times and Places, was ever every where receiv'd, and is now profess'd in all Churches, and in all Parts of the World. Instead of this Universality for Ages and Extension, the Roman Creed bears date, 1564, and being dated from *Rome*, is profess'd by none but those of that Communion, which are but few, in comparison with the rest of the Christian World. So that if you pass into the *African*, or *Greek*, or *Eastern Churches*, which are vast and numerous, you shall find

find no other Creed but that of the Apostles, explained by the *Nicene* and the *Athanasian*; if in some of these Places they have some of the Roman Opinions, or some of their own as doubtful and new, yet they have no other Confession of Faith, than as we have in our Reformed Churches in the *West*.

Nay even in the Church of *Rome*, in the third Session of the *Tridentine* Council, 1546, they made a Decree, that according to the Example of the Fathers, "they would make a Confession of that Faith which in ancient times had been an impenetrable Shield against all Heresies, which alone had been used for the Conversion of Unbelievers, for the Confusion of Hereticks, and for the Confirmation of the Faithful; and then repeated the *Nicene* Creed and no more; declaring, "That that was the express and formal Faith of the Church of *Rome*, that Faith which is the Principle of Christian Unity, and the sure and only Foundation against which the Gates of Hell shall never prevail.

Happy had it been for the Christian World, if this matter had so remain'd; and the Roman Articles under *Pius 4.* eighteen Years after, had not been made a necessary and essential Part of the Catholick Faith. However 'tis to be observ'd further; that even now in the Roman Church, when they baptize Children or grown Persons, they use none but the Apostles Creed; and to make them Members of Christ and of his Church, and Heirs of his Kingdom, oblige them to the Profession of no other Articles, but those that are the ancient Confession of Faith common to all Christian Churches. Nay, more, whilst they live in that Communion in all Acts of Worship, and when they die in it, and are to make the last Confession of that Saving Faith, of which they soon expect the End and Consummation, they use none but the three Catholick Creeds; the Roman serves only to tie

all Power and Government to St. *Peter's* Chair, and to persecute Hereticks withal. So that this Roman Creed being for Temporal Advantages, being not contain'd in the Word of God, nor proved by the Testimony nor by the Miracles of the Primitive Church, nor received by former Ages, nor by any Church but the Roman, nor by that but very lately, and only in some cases profest: we have great reason to believe, that it is in no wise necessary to Salvation. The Christian and universal Creed having been esteemed sufficient without any other, for more than fifteen hundred Years, ought to be so esteemed still, without this Addition, which is proved but by very unlikely and uncertain Miracles, and by the Attestation of but that one particular Church for whose Wealth and Grandeur it so intirely makes.

These things considered, we ought no ways to be dismayed with the frightful Words or Countenance of any that pronounce us accurs'd and damn'd, because we hold not, nor can believe what *Pius* the 4th did lately declare to be *de Fide* requisite to Salvation. We shall find saving Instructions and Comfort enough in the Christian Creed, which God's Word expressly confirms, and the whole Church hath ever own'd, if we embrace and study more and more the Divine and invariable Truths it contains, and sincerely endeavour to lead our Lives accordingly.

II. What I have affirmed of the Roman Faith, is to be understood also of the Roman Worship: That Part of it which is not approved by us is very bad; palliated or reproved by the cunningest or wisest of their Church; or however no ways necessary, which is all I am at present concerned in.

Indeed as to the Essentials of Divine Worship all Christians are agreed, That God should have our Prayers and Praises, in the Name of Jesus Christ our Mediator; even the matter

matter of our Requests is fixt and uniform amongst all that own the Lord's Prayer; so far the Church of *Rome* hath many excellent and ancient Composures, very unlike those new ones we reject. That part of their publick or private Worship which is grounded upon the Christian Creed, is very good: and if they went no further, we might as lawfully joyn with them, as they might with us. We have inserted nothing doubtful or controverted in our Offices of Religion, nothing but what as to the sense is used and approved by all Churches. Had they done so, and extended their Worship no further than could be justified by that Christian Belief which is common to all, the Differences betwixt them and other Christians had been much less, and more reconcileable. But they have turned all the Points of their new Creed into Exercises of publick Religion: and these we do not think to be acceptable to God, nor requisite to acquit us of that Adoration and Service which we owe to his Divine Majesty.

We are persuaded that without making or worshipping Images of God, we may pay him that Homage which he requires of us; that if we devoutly commemorate our Saviour's Passion, and with thankful Hearts put our Trust in the Merits of it, we shall not need to worship the Figure of his Cross; and that if we lift up our Hearts to Heaven, to adore him on the Right Hand of God, we need not worship the Host here on Earth, which many Christians believe to be only the Sacrament of his Death, and none can be sure to be the Substance of his natural Body; no not according to the Tenents of the Church of *Rome*.

Likewise that Part of their Worship which relates to Creatures; the solemn Blessing or consecrating Images, that being hallowed, they may be fit to be set up to receive Incense and Oblations and many Honours, and to excite their Devotion to Saints and Angels: their manifold Pilgrimages and

and Prayers to those beatified Creatures; The great dependence they express to have upon their Intercession, their Merit and their Power; The many Miracles and Mercies they are said to receive from them; And the high Celebrations and Returns of religious Gratitude which they render to them: All these which make too great a Part of their publick and private Devotions, we have great reason to believe to be inconsistent with God's revealed Will, and with our Duty and Obligations to him; or however, no ways necessary.

I appeal to them that have either read the New Testament, or learned the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the ten Commandments, which all Churches teach to be the Principles of the Christian Religion, whether our calling upon him in whom we believe, and serving him alone that hath declared himself jealous of his Honour, and using no Images in our Addresses to him that hath forbid them; and approaching to God by that one Mediator whom he hath appointed, and who died and merited all for us, and bad us come to him, and use his Name alone in all our Requests; Whether this Worship which is paid to God amongst us, be not more conformable to his holy Word, and to the Grounds of our common Christianity, than that which is established in the Church of *Rome*? Whatever they may think of us where the Inquisition reigns, and under it blind Ignorance, and a terrible Aversion against them that are called Hereticks; yet elsewhere Men of better Sense and greater Instruction, though of the same Church, can hardly pronounce us to be God's Enemies, and the Objects of his Wrath, because we are afraid to give his Glory to others, and to transgress his Laws: or however their Thoughts will not alter the case, and can do us no Harm, we having a Rule of God's own prescribing to believe and to worship by, and whilst we render to God the things that are God's,

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we need not fear the rash Censures of uncharitable Men.

We have the Warrant of Holy Scripture, and the Concurrence and Approbation of all Christian Churches for the Worship establish'd in our Church: if accordingly we serve God with Sincerity and Devotion, we shall have the Reward of them that diligently seek him; however we transgress no Law of his, and we run no Risk: But if the worshipping of Saints and Images should prove unacceptable, the Papists run a great Danger, they having neither Antiquity nor Scripture for the same, whilst the Admonitions of their Fellow Christians, and some Divine Prohibitions are *point-blank* against it.

III. As for the Necessity of a good Life, our Church recommends it at least as much as the Roman. All Christians believe a Judgment to come, and a Retribution to Men according to their Works; so we have all the same Promises of God, and the same Rewards propounded to encourage us to do good; we believe the same Threats and the same Punishments to deter us from Evil; we all think our selves obliged to Morality, and to be truly vertuous, knowing that without Holiness no Man shall see God: and I make no doubt but that in other Christian Communions as well as in ours, there are many who truly fear God and work Righteousness. The Difference betwixt us and the Roman Church, is not whether or no we ought to be good; but every one in either Church, according to his Sincerity and his firm Perswasion of the Truth of Christianity, endeavours to approve himself to the Searcher of Hearts; so far we are agreed. They have many things in their Roman Creed, and in their Worship, which we cannot approve; but we have the same Rules of Life, the same Divine Laws to direct our Obedience.

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And I would to God we did all join in those things which admit of no Dispute, and wherein we are all agreed, and did lay the great Strefs of our Hopes and of our Endeavours on them, *viz.* the hearty Profession of the same Christian Creed, the sincere Worship of the same God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and a serious Earnestness to follow the Example and the Precepts of our common Saviour, and to live in this present World soberly, righteously and godly : These that are the great things of God, and the Foundations of Christian Religion, and of true Goodness being owned on both sides, if they were minded as our Interest in them, and their Certainty do require, would go near to compose our Differences in other things, and to restrain that uncharitable Zeal which hath doom'd to Damnation Millions of good Christians.

However, they that truly believe all the Articles of the Christian Faith, and worship God according to his Will, and our Saviour's Institutions, and are careful to live like Christians worthy of the Gospel, need not regard those Devices, nor fear those Judgments which proceed only from Men; they may be true and happy Saints both here and hereafter, that have for Faith, and the Service of God, and for a Holy Life all that is of Divine Appointment, without the Roman Additions. Our rejecting what the Church of *Rome* hath for her Interest imposed, where her Power doth reach, will in no wise exclude us from Heaven, if we be true to what we own. If by our Life and Profession we confess Christ here before Men, and are not ashamed of him, nor of his Words, we need not fear he should hereafter disown us, because of their Anger that would have us take for Gospel whatever they dictate. Damnation shall not be inflicted according to Mens Passions and Uncharitableness; we ought to run from the Danger of it, as far as is possible, by preserving that Faith, we were baptized into,
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pure and undefiled, and by living according to it : But had the Promises of Mercy and Salvation been annexed to our Submission to *Rome*, either the universal Church would have clearly expressed it in making Men Members of Christ, and Heirs of his Kingdom, or to be sure God would have revealed it. And seeing none of these is done, it doth plainly demonstrate that such a Submission is designed for Temporal Power, but no ways requisite to bring Men to Heaven, and that consequently the hard Sentence of Roman Bigots against us, may be prejudicial to them, but can do us no Harm.

This might suffice to shew that we are safe notwithstanding their Outcries of Damnation against us, that Part of their Religion which is called *Popery*, being no Part of God's revealed Will and Saving Truth, nor of the Primitive and Catholick Christianity embraced by the whole Christian Church.

In point of Faith, or of Divine Worship what is peculiar to them is far enough from being necessary : and for Rules of Conversation we have the same Precepts, and believe the same Promises and the same Punishments. So that though we reject many of their own Inventions, yet still we want nothing necessary to Salvation, and in order to it, they have no Advantage over us.

But I may not stay here. The Interest of Truth and human Souls obligeth me to say farther, that we are safer in our Church, and have several Advantages for the obtaining Comfort and eternal Happiness, of which they are destitute in the Church of *Rome*.

First, I say that we are safer. What we believe as an Article of Faith, is undoubtedly true, owned by all Christians in all Ages of the World, and plainly revealed in God's Word ; whereas those Traditions which the Church of *Rome* hath tack'd to the ancient Faith, are newly coyn'd,

yet more newly made a Creed, are not warranted by Divine Revelation, nor embraced by Christians of other Communions. And what a Presumption is it to change the Terms of Salvation, and make those things necessary which God hath not prescribed, and the Christian Church for many hundred Years hath not owned as a Part of her Saving Faith?

This is so like adding to the Book of God, preaching another Gospel, and teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of Men; that we think our selves much safer within the ancient Boundaries, and look upon it as a very dangerous Attempt, to make new Creeds and impose them upon Mens Consciences, especially when those Additions are not only beyond what is written, but also of another Nature, and even contrary. The Christian Creed is for Life everlasting, the Roman for the Roman Greatness; the Christian expresseth our Obligations to God, and our dependence upon him, the Roman is a Profession of Subjection to *Rome*; the Christian engageth Men to serve God only, the Roman to worship Creatures also; the Christian makes our Blessed Redeemer to be our only Mediator, the Roman joyns to him the blessed Saints and the Blessed Virgin. There are so many things in all Appearance very irreconcilable betwixt these two Confessions of Faith, that the Roman cannot be safe; and that we may conclude without Uncharitableness, that they of that Persuasion that shall attain to Heaven, shall not come thither by the Help of the Roman Doctrines, but by discharging their Baptismal Engagements which are the same with ours, and by professing the ancient common Creed of all Christians.

The Points of their own Creed are so far from conducing to Mens Salvation, that they rather will prove great Hindrances to it. They engage Men in a Worship very unlike to what we read in the Apostolical Writings, or the antient Fathers. Besides the unknown Tongue, and the maim'd

main'd Communion, there is so much of it that is merely humane and ceremonious, so much of it that relates to the Souls in Purgatory or the Saints in Heaven, that we wish it may meet with Pardon, but cannot think it should find Acceptance. There are so many strange Exorcisms and Consecrations in their Rituals and Pontifical, that after having read the Bible, a Man can never think theirs to be that Worship in Spirit and in Truth, which the Gospel appoints. We dare not offer to Almighty God what is so like to be injurious to him, and so unlike his own Institutions; and have much greater Assurance to have our Sacrifice of Prayers and Praises accepted, when according to Divine Appointment we offer it to God, in the Name of his Blessed Son.

The same holds also for vertuous living and Improvement in Goodness, that their new Doctrines are rather Obstacles to, than Helps towards it. The great dependence upon *Rome* and the Papal Power, hath made many of that Communion very ill Subjects, and many more very cruel and uncharitable to all other Christians. The making a whole State of Sin, although known and persisted in, yet to be a State of Pardon and Safety, consistent with the Love of God; the buying and Imputation of other Mens Merits and good Works; the easy Purchase of many Indulgences, the customary and frequent Absolutions for mortal Sins; the Patronage of the greatest Saints to the greatest Sinners, when they are their particular Votaries: such prevailing Opinions as these abate much of the Necessity of a serious and speedy Repentance and earnest Pursuits after Sanctification, and too much gratify the Corruptions of Men that are desirous to enjoy their Lusts, and not lose the Hopes of Heaven. So if Mixture of false and uncertain Propositions with their Faith; if a Worship very corrupt, and very superstitious; and if Doctrines apt to betray Men to a careless and vicious Life: if these can endanger humane Souls,

Souls, we cannot think them safe in the Church of *Rome*. So far as they differ from us, in their Additions to the Primitive Faith, so far they are in danger. We pronounce no Sentence, and we pray Divine Mercy to pardon them that err in the Simplicity of their Heart: But their Errors and suitable Practices may be the Ruine of many, and our Charity can save none. Blessed be God, we are safer, and have many Advantages for Comfort and for Holiness, of which they are destitute.

Men of a timorous and a tender Conscience amongst them, can never have a comfortable Knowledge and Assurance of their having confest all their Mortal Sins, or all those Circumstances that alter the kind: nor of the Intention of the Priest, which is necessary to make effectual his Absolutions; nor of the Validity of any Sacerdotal Ministrations and Consecrations, all which depend upon secret Intentions or Irregularities, which may be incurr'd many ways, and may proceed so far as to be irremediable; of these which according to their Principles, so much concerns their Happiness, a thoughtful Man (I say) can never be so sure as to make him rejoyce in Hope, and have a solid Peace. And what a sad Prospect is it to them that think the Sufferings of this present Life so very grievous, that after all their Pains and Charges to gain Pardons and Indulgences, and Prayers for their Souls, they can have no Assurance without a Miracle, but that they shall lie hundred of Years in scorching Flames, paying the Score of those temporal Punishments which were due to their Sins.

Besides the Uncomfortableness of these Roman Tenents, they want in that Communion the Benefit of those Divine Instructions which were written for our Learning; *that we through Comfort of the Scriptures might have Hope*. That holy Word of God which giveth Light and Understanding to the Simple, and is able to make us wise unto Salvation,
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and to save our Souls, if we believe the Blessed Author of it: That Word in the Church of *Rome* is kept from the People, lest it should make the Ways of God plain before their Faces, and shew them what a mighty Change in the Christian Religion hath been made amongst them. And that keeps the Vulgar in a State of Darkness and timorous Superstition, and deprives them of those Spiritual Joys and Improvements, which Divine Revelation would afford.

If any Book in the World can be truly pleasant and comfortable, it is the Holy Bible; wherein we see the infinite Wisdom and Power and Providence of God, in the Creation and Government of the World, and particularly in his Care for them that love and serve him: The sacred History is so full of Comfort in all Changes of Humane Life; the infinite Goodness and other Perfections of God are so clearly revealed in it, that by reading thereof, an attentive Christian in all his Afflictions is inspir'd with wise and good Thoughts, and Courage, and Firmness of Mind, and a joyful dependence upon God. Then the Mercies and Mysteries of our Redemption, the Life and Death of our Blessed Saviour, the Excellency of his Precepts, and of the Sermons and Writings of his Apostles, and the infinite Graciousness of his Promises: These are so ravishing and so wonderful, so apt to support our Spirits, and to nourish our Hopes, to give a good Man a fore-Taste of the Joys of Heaven, and to bring us to the Likeness and the Sense of God's Love, that nothing can give equal Comforts to Christians, or any ways supply the Want of these. It would be the greatest Wonder why any Church that believes the Old and New Testament to be the Book of God, should forbid the reading of it: but that the Contrariety betwixt their Traditions and those Divine Writings is very apparent to them that can consult and compare both. That, or
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nothing, must excuse their Uncharitableness in taking the Divine Oracles from them, for whose Consolation and Guidance they were appointed.

Again, they want the Comfort and Instruction of God's publick Worship. What Scriptures are read in the publick Assemblies of the Roman Communion, are in the Latin Tongue, by which the Understanding of the People is rendered unfruitful. What Prayers and Supplications are put up to God, are in the same Language; they know not what is said, and therefore cannot assent with their Hearts, nor excite such devout Affections in their Souls as would recommend their common Requests to the Throne of Grace. Neither are the Celebrations of the Divine Goodness understood, they praise not God with joyful Lips: And that pious Intercourse they should have with him, in paying their Homage, and presenting their Thanks and Petitions to his Divine Majesty, being thus interrupted by their not understanding what is said, they are deprived of one of the principal Means of Edification. 'Tis strange it should ever enter into the Hearts of Men, to offer to God for a reasonable Service, Words of which they know not the Signification. And it renders ineffectual those Acts of Religion which should most affect and better the Hearts of Christian Worshippers, and raise up their Thoughts and their Affections to Heaven.

From hence it is, that we have more knowledge of God, and more Understanding of the Christian Religion. They amongst us that really believe Christianity, and would make sure of the Happiness it offers, by searching and meditating of the Holy Scriptures, and by joyning with the publick Worship; whilst they attend and understand what the Church saith to God, and what he saith to us, are much improved

the Surest Way to Heaven

improved in those great Principles of Religion, which they learn'd in their Catechism, and are made to grow in Grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord. They have in these two, what perpetually informs their Judgment, and excites their Will to cleave to God and Goodness; and after their best Endeavours to rely upon those infinite Mercies of God in Christ our Redeemer, on which the greatest of Roman Champions confessed that it is most safe to repose our whole Trust and Confidence.

Answerable to those, are the publick Exhortations of our Church, by the Mouth of her Ministers, and the Books of Religious Instruction, wherewith she entertains her Children. Their Time and Zeal and Attention are not taken up in Sprinklings, Kissings of Reliques, going in Pilgrimage, visiting of Shrines, paying devout Veneration to Saints and Images, and reciting Beads and Rosaries, and the Offices of *St. Bridget*, or the like. Neither these things, nor any of this Nature, which can neither instruct nor reform the World, nor give Comfort to Christian Souls, are recommended to our People: They are clearly taught wherein true Religion and substantial Goodness consist, and exhorted to lay on them the great Stress of their Hopes and of their Endeavours, and devoutly to make use of those means of Grace which are of Divine Appointment, and thereby to establish their Hearts in the Love of God, and a chearful dependence upon the infinite Merits and Mercies of our dear Saviour.

Nothing of the whole Counsel of God is by our Church kept back from us, our Belief is unquestionable, being truly Primitive and Universal; our Worship of God is according to his Will, and his most blessed Nature; and our Rule of Life and Conversation comprehends all Duties:

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To fear God, and honour the King, and love one another, and continue patient in well-doing. Ours is indeed a Doctrine according to Godliness; and of it, it may be testified in the Words of St. Peter, that *it is the true Grace of God, wherein we stand.*

If we are not wanting to our selves, we want nothing that can either shew us the Way to Happiness, or help and forward us in it; we ought to express our Charity to them that err, and want many of those Blessings and Advantages which we have for the obtaining eternal Salvation; we should earnestly pray for them, and what we can promote their Instruction, but by no means fear their Threatnings and Sentences of Damnation.

He that in earnest would go to Heaven, and professeth Christianity, not to obtain Favour with Men, but to please God, and to save his immortal Soul, can be no where safer than in our Church. Therein he professeth that Faith which all Christian Communions hold to be truly Divine, and therein he may make his Calling and Election sure, if he will but practise answerably to his Belief, add to his Faith Vertue, and not be unfruitful in the knowledg of our Lord Jesus Christ. The more he understands his Religion, the more he will love it, and be convinc'd that he is in the right: And the more carefully he lives according to his Profession, with a Conscience void of Offence towards God and towards Men, the more assurance will he have that he shall be happy.

All other Grounds of Hope besides Truth and Righteousness will prove vain. But he that stands upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-Stone: He that studies and minds his Duty, and earnestly begs for the Divine Assistance that
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he may live to God, and remain faithful unto Death: he shall receive the Crown of Life, though some presumptuous Men dare condemn him to Death.

Whatever Confidence or high Pretences some may have, whatever Ways and Devices they invent for to gain Heaven: *Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life; no Man cometh unto the Father, but by him; there is no other Name under Heaven given unto Men, whereby they can be saved, but only the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ; He that calleth and believeth on him shall not be confounded.* Here let us fix, and not regard what Men say, nor what they can do: But look unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith, firmly relying on his Almighty Goodness, *who is able to save them to the uttermost that come to God by him, being ever living to make Intercession for them.*

F I N I S.

BOOKS lately Printed for *Richard Chiswell.*

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